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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE 0517  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2338  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2617  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3304  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002588

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TAGS: [ASEAN](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH PHILIPPINE  
PRESIDENT ARROYO

Classified By: Deputy Secretary Negroponte, reasons 1.4 c, d

11. (C) Summary: Philippine President Gloria Arroyo and Deputy  
Secretary Negroponte lauded stronger U.S.-Philippine ties,

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including continued close cooperation in counterterrorism and  
the Mindanao peace process during a July 31 meeting at  
Malacanang Palace. Arroyo pledged to take a "measured  
approach" to resolving the current security crisis in Basilan  
to avoid damaging the peace process, but made clear that the  
central government was committed to bringing to justice those  
responsible for the beheadings of 10 Marines. She  
acknowledged U.S. concerns over reported extrajudicial  
killings, and said recent court convictions demonstrated that  
the Philippine government was committed to human rights.  
Arroyo lauded ASEAN's agreement to accelerate establishment  
of a regional common market to 2015 and pointed to its  
adoption of an ASEAN charter with a human rights committee as  
clear signs the organization was willing to take on difficult  
issues like Burma. The two welcomed recent progress in the  
Six-Party Talks, but agreed that continued pressure was  
needed to ensure that North Korea produced a complete  
accounting of its nuclear programs and lived up fully to its  
commitments to denuclearize. End summary.

C/T Cooperation Strengthens Relations  
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12. (C) President Arroyo and the Deputy Secretary agreed  
U.S.-Philippine ties had strengthened in the past 18 months,  
particularly in counterterrorism cooperation with the  
neutralization of Abu Sayyaf leaders. The Deputy Secretary  
stressed that he carried a robust message of support from  
President Bush and Secretary Rice for close relations with  
the Philippines and with ASEAN. Secretary Rice was currently  
on travel in the Middle East with Secretary Gates, but this  
should not suggest diminished support for ASEAN or Southeast  
Asia. SE Asian states were vital partners for the U.S., with  
growing economic importance, and ASEAN's commitment at this  
summit to seek to achieve a common market by 2015 was an  
important development.

Pressing for Change in ASEAN  
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13. (C) President Arroyo concurred, saying that ASEAN's  
dynamic economic changes were matched by significant  
political progress, notably agreement on an ASEAN charter  
that included a human rights body -- with even Burma signing

on. This was a sign ASEAN was moving away from the consensus decision-making that had hampered it in the past; it also might lead to positive change in Burma. The Deputy Secretary said he hoped these changes would indeed have a positive impact, not only on ASEAN broadly but specifically in Burma. Arroyo expressed her hope for a bilateral meeting with President Bush, and for a U.S.-ASEAN summit meeting, perhaps in the U.S., to parallel similar gatherings with Japan and China. The Deputy Secretary took note of the request and said that President Bush would be taking part in the APEC summit in Australia.

#### Seeking Justice, Preserving Peace in Mindanao

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14. (C) Turning to the current security crisis in Basilan province over the killing and mutilation of 14 Philippine Marines, Arroyo stressed that the government and military were taking a measured approach, trying to mount a "surgical" operation focused on capturing five key suspects and limiting "collateral damage" to both the local population and the Mindanao peace process. Her government had just agreed to give the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) and local leaders an additional two days to firm up evidence against the suspects. She thanked the USG for its strong support for the peace process, saying that it had provided a successful paradigm combining hard and soft power.

#### Commitment to Resolve Extrajudicial Killings

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15. (C) The President also welcomed recent budget action by the U.S. Senate to increase assistance to the Philippines, but voiced concern that Philippine "leftists" had lobbied the

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U.S. Congress to lower aid because of alleged human rights violations. Acknowledging concerns about extrajudicial killings, Arroyo stressed that such human rights violations were not carried out as part of Philippine government policy. To the contrary, the government was actively investigating the killings and had obtained six convictions so far. The Deputy Secretary agreed on the importance of resolving the issue, voicing confidence in the ability of the Philippines' democratic structures -- including its free press -- to deal with this difficult problem.

#### Maintaining Momentum in Six-Party Process

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16. (C) Turning to another "Asian flashpoint," Arroyo noted she and the Deputy Secretary would be meeting shortly with the new North Korean foreign minister and the heads of delegation from the other Six-Party partners. She praised recent progress in the Talks, but stressed the need for continued movement, including in the five working groups. The Deputy Secretary said North Korea's actions in producing a comprehensive list of its nuclear facilities would be a key sign of its commitment to the process. It remained to be seen if Pyongyang would be forthcoming or drag its feet; past experience suggested the process would not be smooth, and we would need to induce them to cooperate and then hold them to their commitments. But clearly a nuclear North Korea was in no one's interest, including China's, and Pyongyang's nuclear programs produced a "spiralling effect" that could induce other countries like Japan to reconsider their own status, the Deputy Secretary noted. Conversely, a nuclear agreement could bring Pyongyang better relations with all countries in the region, including the U.S.

17. (U) July 31, 2007; 18:00; Manila, Philippines

18. (U) Meeting Participants:

Philippines

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo  
Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo  
Undersecretary for Policy Erlinda Basilio  
Maria Josefina Ceballos, Deputy Presidential Assistant for  
Foreign Affairs

U.S.

Deputy Secretary John Negroponte  
Ambassador Kristie Kenney  
DCM Paul Jones  
Political Counselor Tom Gibbons (notetaker)  
KENNEY